DEMOCRATIC
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UNION MEN SACKED

TOP CRIMINALS FREED

450 top nazi war criminals, handed over in custody to the West German police on January 14th by the Soviet Union, were immediately released.

The 450 criminals, largely SS men, had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in the Soviet Union for war crimes. Their crimes were so bad that the Soviet Union did not amnesty these men together with the thousands of other criminals amnestied and returned to Germany, but handed them over in custody to serve the remainder of their sentence.

The West Germany authorities issued a vague statement that the cases of the returned criminals would be "investigated". In the meantime the men were all granted 6000 marks "compensation" for the sentences they have already served.

W. German Moves Against Progressives

Bonn, West Germany — The West German Government has begun to apply increasing pressure to gag all opposition in West Germany, and in particular to reduce Communist and progressive influence in the factories. In its efforts the government is receiving full support from West German industry and right-wing trade union leaders.

In the past few weeks, elected Communist shop stewards have been sacked without notice from a number of factories, and West German ministers have foreshadowed other undefined measures to be taken against what they describe as "the Communist menace."

On January 16th, right-wing leaders of the West German Building Workers Union, acting on Government urging, dissolved the entire district administration of the union in the Ruhr area, claiming that it was "Communist infiltrated". 25 of the full-time elected union officials, including many non-Communists, were sacked without notice, and hundreds of other part time officials were also removed. The union officials had all been elected by the 50,000 members of their union in this district.

The right-wing leaders who ordered the dismissals stated that the district would be run in future by officials named from headquarters. New elections in the union would only be held "when guarantees existed that they could be fully democratic". This is taken to mean that new elections will only be allowed if or when a right-wing majority is certain.

„But there's still blood on it!"

(From "Deutsche Michel". West Germany)

(Public opinion polls in West Germany have shown that an overwhelming majority reject service in the new Wehrmacht.)

On January 7th, two Communist members of the elected shop council of the big Westfalenhuette Foundry in Dortmund were sacked without notice by the management. The official reason given for the sacking was that the men had "disturbed labour peace" in the factory by travelling to Berlin to congratulate Wilhelm Pieck, President of the German Democratic Republic, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. They travelled on their own time, having taken part of their annual holiday for the purpose.

Right-wing union leaders have supported the bosses in this case by refusing assistance to the two shop stewards who are appealing to the Labour Court against their dismissal. Workers in the factory itself have passed a resolution of

(cont. on next page)

Maggy Higgins Rattles Her Sabre

"WEST SHOULD AIM FOR ARMED REVOLT IN EAST GERMANY" — U. S. Journalist

The western nations should arm rebels to overthrow the Government of the German Democratic Republic, according to a proposal made by Margaret Higgins, well-known US journalist.

Miss Higgins, foreign correspondent of the "New York Herald Tribune" and wife of a US General, aired her sabre-rattling views in an interview with "U. S. News and World Report" on January 2nd.

"I think the East Germans have every right to help and support and sympathy in their attempt to throw off the Red colonial rule" she said. "If the west would encourage the East Germans to resist I think you could make life so uncomfortable for the Russians that they'd get out of East Germany with their Communism, if you had a resistance movement, the same sort of thing that you had in Morocco against the French.

"I think in the unnatural extension of power to a place like Germany, where you have the West Germans right next door and Berlin in the heart of East Germany, you have the opportunity, not to bring all-out revolt, but for steady needling."

GERMAN REPORT does not regard Miss Higgins as being a very important person, but she has stated so openly what certain American agencies are already doing privately that it is worth taking a closer look at her war-like pronouncements.

1. Miss Higgins calls on the western powers to give help to East German malcontents to overthrow their government. Her reference to Morocco makes it obvious that the sort of "help" she envisages would be the supply of arms to old nazis and militarists still living in East Germany.

2. She calmly proposes that these nazi bandits, equipped with American arms, should "make life so uncomfortable for the Russians that they'd get out of East Germany". In other words she is suggesting that terrorists should go out and shoot Soviet soldiers who are stationed in the German Democratic Republic as a result of the four-power occupation of Germany after World War Two.

3. She draws attention to the fact that the American authorities can use West Berlin, situated in the heart of East Germany, as a centre for organising subversive activity against the German Democratic Republic.

As readers of GERMAN REPORT know, Miss Higgins' proposals are only a reflection of what US Government agencies are already doing with regard to the German Democratic Republic. Using West Berlin, in accordance with Miss Higgins' recipe, American and American-financed bodies regularly dispatch spies and saboteurs into the German Democratic Republic. During 1955 many hundreds of such agents were arrested by the authorities here, or surrendered voluntarily. They were found to be equipped with large quantities of American arms, explosives, radio transmitters and other material.

In addition, RIAS the official US German-language radio station in West Berlin constantly broadcasts instructions on how to sabotage the East German economy most effectively.

In fact, the only one of Miss Higgin's proposals which has not yet been put into effect on a large scale is her suggestion to "make life uncomfortable for the Russians", presumably by shooting them. Possibly she was being a little premature.

The full enormity of her bland suggestions can best be envisaged if they are reversed. Just imagine what the reaction in western countries would be if a Soviet journalist proposed in an interview that the Soviet Union should supply arms to discontented people in West Germany so that they could shoot down British, French and American soldiers.

(cont. from preceding page)

UNION MEN SACKED

protest against the sacking of their elected representatives.

Four days later, police entered the steelworks "Ruhrstahl AG" in Brackwerde, Westphalia, and arrested shop steward Fritz Beckmann at the bench. Beckmann had been elected by his fellow workers to serve on the factory council.

Charges against Beckmann were not known at the time of going to press, but the arrest followed a public protest made by Beckmann against the fact that the factory was being converted to work on shell-casings for the new West German Wehrmacht.

West German courts are supporting the campaign by finding in favour of employers who dismiss progressive workers. On January 13th the Cassel Labour Court decided against a worker named Stephan, who in 1954 had helped to organise a plebiscite against the new Wehrmacht. Although he had organised the plebiscite outside the factory, and not inside, he was sacked for "disturbing labour peace". The Labour Court ruled that dismissal without notice in such a case was fully permissible.

Right-wing union leaders in the railway union have joined in the campaign of repression by refusing to place the names of Communist unionists, proposed by local branches, on the central list of candidates for the coming election to the railway works council.

Note of Regret

"Bonn, Thursday — A slim, 6ft. German lieutenant-colonel is to make the trip to England he was robbed of in 1940."

"Then he helped to assemble the barges and other craft for Hitler's planned invasion — operation Sea Lion. 'But', said Oberst-Leutnant Hans Hinrichs, of Germany's new Wehrmacht, today, 'it was called off and called off, and then it was too late.' "

"Now, more than 15 years later, Hinrichs is going to England to take a full course at Camberley Staff College, the first German ever to do so."

"Daily Express", London, January 6th 1956

You Ask – We Answer

"WHAT ABOUT RAILWAYS"

British Engine Driver Wants to Know

"I am an engine driver, and if possible would like to know what conditions operate on the railways in East Germany, particularly the locomotive grades."

J. B. Birmingham, England

The railways are the biggest nationally owned concern in East Germany, and its top-ranking officials are almost all workers — old railwaymen and sons of railwaymen who have had the chance to qualify themselves since 1945. Training is open to all, right up to the new Transport College, which opened in Dresden in 1955.

The Minister of Transport, Erwin Kramer, is himself an old railway engineer who fought with the International Brigades in Spain.

The railways have always been state-owned in Germany, so it is perhaps worth while to point out some of the differences between the old state-owned and the present system in East Germany.

From the days of Bismarck right up to 1945, lower railway officials were mainly former non-commissioned army men who had completed their twelve years' service, medium grade officials were former low-ranking officers of infantry and artillery regiments, and top officials came mainly from the big railway construction firms.

Wages, routes and freight prices were fixed to the advantage of the most influential branches of heavy industry.

Under capitalism the railways were built with the money collected in taxes from the man in the street, the state built the railways, but the big industrial magnates got huge profits out of railway construction contracts.

Today the railways are really owned by the people in East Germany, so that fares and freight rates are fixed, new lines developed and new types of railway engines and coaches are developed to serve the people.

About one third of the rail passenger transport, for instance, is transport of workers to and from work, and special attention has been paid to increasing these services; all the new double-decker coaches run on these lines.

Holiday services for workers at greatly reduced rates also get special attention, and in 1955 about three and a half million children travelled to and from holiday homes by train. Some of the special holiday trains have bus services attached which call for holiday makers at their doors and bring them from the station to their hotel or holiday home. On many holiday trains there is one coach for children, and parents just turn their children over to the Red Cross worker who travels with them.

The railways have their share of the general economic plan to fulfil too. This is decided centrally, within the framework of the over-all plan for the year — the amount of goods and number of passengers to be transported, type of repairs and new installations to be undertaken and so on.

The repair of old coaches and locomotives and the building of new ones has been a very difficult problem, since railway installations were very badly damaged during the war and it has not yet been possible to build enough new repair works to deal with the work.

Another very serious problem was the lack of steam coal, but this has been to a considerable extent overcome by converting to the use of raw brown coal.

Living conditions of railway workers have improved enormously. Since 1946, average wages have risen nearly 45 %, while prices have remained stable.

An engine driver gets a basic wage of 480 marks, rising to 630 marks according to training and years of service. (The average wage throughout industry is about 380 marks.) But an engine driver can actually earn up to 1000 marks a month, for there are bonuses for mileage covered and tonnage transported, as well as percentages on economies in fuel and lubricants. The driver of a passenger train will of course get less bonus on tonnage, but more on mileage, so that it is in his own interest to keep his engine in good running order.

According to the latest wage regulations of October 1955, engine drivers and firemen are in the same wage group, and firemen get almost as much as engine drivers. Premiums paid according to length of service and qualifications (in addition to the bonuses mentioned above), range from 5 % to 15 %. A fireman, for instance, may get 5 % over the basic wage after five years' service, 10 % after ten years' service, or when he has passed all required examinations, he can himself become an engine-driver and is then entitled to 15 % over the basic wage.

A station master gets 420–450 marks a month with additional bonuses according to length of service and qualifications, and a shunter gets 300—350 marks with additional bonuses.

The percentage of women working on the railways, in all kinds of jobs except those which come under the category of heavy work not permitted to women, has increased from 8.6 % in 1946 to 19.4 % in 1955. Women get exactly the same pay as men in the same jobs.

Hostels are provided in all big railway centres, and in smaller stations where the turn-around times are shorter, there are clubs and dining-rooms. This service has been greatly stepped up in the last few years, and about three million marks were spent on it in 1955 alone. The result has been a noticeable reduction in stomach ailments due to irregular meals and sleep.

The railway medical service now has seven big polyclinics equipped to handle all types of illness, with 30-bed hospitals attached, seven smaller clinics, 2 night sanatoria — where patients go for evening treatment and a night's rest, sometimes over a period of weeks — 13 creches and about 350 first-aid stations.

The "Einheit" Railway Repair Works in Leipzig, for instance, has a new polyclinic, opened in 1955, which cost 6 million marks.

All big stations also have kindergartens for railway workers' children, and there are a number of weekly homes for children of workers who travel a great deal — women train conductors on long-distance lines, for instance.

A railway medical research centre was opened in 1951, where special research work is done on various diseases prevalent among railway workers, such as eye strain, rheumatism and stomach ailments. The use

of brown coal for stoking led to the appearance of "dust lung" among firemen, but the research centre was able to work out a brown coal mixture which did not develop so much dust, so that there is now no danger of this disease.

Labour protection measures are checked by trade union commissions, as in other branches of industry. But accidents do happen, and railwaymen can take out life insurance policies up to 25,000 marks at special rates.

The widow of a railwayman killed at work is entitled to his basic pay for at least one year after his death. If a railwayman has to take lower-paid work after an accident resulting in partial, permanent disablement, he is entitled to have the difference in pay made up for at least one year thereafter.

Regular social insurance covers the usual payments in cases of illness, medical attention for the worker and his family, convalescent holidays etc.

Holidays (with pay, of course,) range from 14 days to one month. In 1955, 260,000 railwaymen went away for holidays at very much reduced prices, some to the 15 holiday homes — in the mountains or on the Baltic Sea — owned by the railways, and some to places reserved for them through the general trade union holiday service. The railways also have a number of training schools and children's holiday homes.

There are 21 big railway club houses and over 800 club rooms, and the railway sports association has a membership of over 100,000, amongst them national champions in football, gymnastics, boxing and running.

IS THIS SUPPRESSION?

"We often read about the suppression of the churches in East Germany. Can you tell me what the position really is?"

L. P. Cardiff

Probably the best way to answer this is to quote some news items published in recent weeks in "Neue Zeit", the Christian Democratic Union daily newspaper in East Berlin. Here they are:

"**Wolgast.** Bishop Paul Tkotsch dedicated a new bell in the Heart of Jesus church. The church community contributed the money for the bell, which is named after St. John. The first chimes have now rung out from the tower of the Diaspora church in Wolgast, which is 45 years old, but never before had bells."

"**Altenburg.** Dr. Mitzenheim, Bishop of Thuringia, dedicated the village church in Lohma, near Altenburg, recently restored at a cost of 137,000 marks. The church was set on fire and almost completely burnt out by lightning in 1940."

"**Neuloewenberg, Brandenburg.** Superintendent Braun dedicated the new settlement church in Neuloewenberg. The church is built to harmonise with the architecture of the settlement houses and has 160 seats."

"**Kahla, Thuringia.** Bishop Mitzenheim dedicated St. Margaret's Church in Kahla. The interior decorations have been completely renewed with contributions from the community, the church authorities and the government. The christening stone which is eight hundred years old, was presented by Eisenach Museum."

"**Altenburg.** The old Roman Wehr church in the village of Altenburg near Bernburg on the Saale river has been restored."

"**Jena.** An enthusiastic crowd gathered in an eastern suburb of Jena, near Fuchsturm, for the foundation ceremony of a new church, which will also have rooms for other church activities. Many church members helped minister Ehrhardt with preliminary clearance work."

"**Erfurt.** Reconstruction work on the 14th century Barfuesser church in Erfurt is in full swing. The 20-metre-high walls are already complete."

"**Jena.** For the first time since 1945, Advent and Christmas services could be held in the newly restored St. Michael's Church."

"**Drebach.** Bishop Wunderlich dedicated the new Methodist Church in Drebach in the Erzgebirge mountains. It has been named Christchurch, has an emporium, 250 seats and a bible-study room under the main hall."

"**Berlin.** During the last seven years the (East) Berlin city administration has contributed one and a half million marks for reconstruction of churches in the democratic sector. Just now repairs on the Bartholomew Church in Friedrichshain, which was damaged by bombing during the war, are in full swing, and will probably be finished in 1956. The Resurrection Church in Friedrichshain is also being restored. Extensive restorations are being made to the Sophia Church in Central Berlin. Architectural alterations made during the Nazi period are being removed. The restoration of St. Hedwig's Cathedral is proceeding satisfactorily."

U. S. Professor in E. Germany

An American professor has just spent ten weeks at Jena University in East Germany. He is Professor Samuel Kramer, of Pennsylvania University, an international authority on Sumerian culture. He also gave three lectures at the Humboldt University in East Berlin on this subject. The Sumerians lived in the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and their culture was at its height between 3000 BC and 1600 BC.

Bikes on World's Roof

Bicycles from the German Democratic Republic are one of the popular buys in the Tibetan town of Chamdo, reports Alan Winnington, first British correspondent to visit Tibet since liberation.

Another report from Lhasa, published in the New York "National Guardian" speaks of the "x-ray machinery from the German Democratic Republic" which is being used to diagnose sickness in the first modern hospitals which Tibet has ever known.

SECURITY

Dr. Otto John, former head of the West German Office for the Protection of the Constitution, who sought asylum in East Germany in July 1954, moved back to West Germany on December 12th 1955. Many West German newspapers said he had "chosen freedom".

Since his return he has been held in custody by the West German authorities. This is how the big West German newspaper "Die Welt" commented on the situation on January 7th:

Special Supplement

WRITERS CONFER

Report on the 4th Congress of the German Writers Association, Berlin, January 9th — 11th 1956

The authors, dramatists, poets, essayists and critics of the German Democratic Republic met in Berlin from January 9th to 14th 1956 to discuss their problems, at the 4th Congress of the German Writers' Association.

The writers, including men and women of international fame, such as Arnold Zweig, Bertolt Brecht and Anna Seghers, argued and discussed for six days on the achievements already marked up by democratic literature in Germany, and on the problems which still remained to be solved.

The congress was attended by 224 delegates and 288 guests, including 27 writers from West Germany.

It is impossible for GERMAN REPORT, in the space at its disposal, to present a full picture of the highly interesting discussions at the congress. On this and the following pages we are able to give only a small selection of quotations from some of the more interesting speeches.

Johannes R. Becher, 64 year old poet and Minister of Culture, spoke about the new German writers who for the last forty years have striven to produce works which would help and inspire the working class, just as earlier German writers helped and inspired their own class.

"It is necessary to emphasise this point," he said, "to show that our literature did not simply appear by accident; it was an historical necessity that it asserted itself after long and bitter struggles.

"Our writers were always to be found where Fascism had to be confronted and thrust back, and the history of those years shows that they not only, like Erich Weinert, sought a new public in open meetings where their words reached the ears of many thousands of people; they did not think themselves too fine for street fights and disputes in meetings either. The literature they created was not for connoisseurs, snobs or sensation-hunters. But neither was it a literature for people who wanted to be soothed and lulled.

"It was a pioneer literature, a literature of rolled-up shirt sleeves, of open attacks against the ruling class — a literature which cut into the forests of superstition and backwardness and cleared away the jungle of capitalist anarchy.

"When Hitler came to power in 1933, it was our writers and artists of good-will who proclaimed uncompromising struggle against Nazi barbarity, in the name of all the good and the beautiful which Germany had produced. Our literature showed its true stature in those dark days, amid the flames of the burning of the books, in the concentration camps, in exile, suffering and persecution.

"Our writers set an example; their works were calls to the nation, they were the conscience of the nation itself . . . It is a fact that our literature became great in times of need and of growing struggle. And when Hitler declared war on the Soviet Union, our writers also fought through the loudspeaker and in millions of leaflets. The time has come to write the history of our literature during those years, for what we created then is of the best of German literature."

Of the possibilities opening up for German writers today Becher said: "These seem to me quite exceptional and far greater than ever before. Think of the flood of epic and dramatic events, human fates, tragic conflicts! Think of the heights and the depths, for it was given to us to rise up out of the ruins. Things we had not dared to dream of have come true. We writers have lived through a time when a new way of living was created; we have been able to share in its realities, wonders and joys."

He attributed the failure of some writers to their inability to recognise these great possibilities, and in this connection he emphasised the importance of the new readers, who give writers their inspiration.

"Was it not formerly a high honour," he said. "for an artist to be commissioned to paint a duke? How much

The caricatures of democratic German writers on these pages were drawn by Irish caricaturist Elizabeth Shaw, who lives and works in Berlin. They are reproduced from a book of caricatures specially issued for the German Writers' Congress by kind permission of the Aufbau Verlag Berlin.

WRITERS' GALLERY (1)

Arnold Zweig

Novelist. Became internationally famous in the 1920's for his anti-war novel "The Strange Case of Sergeant Grisha".

greater is the honour of being commissioned by those whose tireless and self-sacrificing work is making life daily better and more beautiful."

Speaking of the difficulties of giving a real picture of life in democratic Germany, Becher said that writers must concern themselves with all sorts of problems of political economy, factory management, price regulations and planning, if they want to give a picture of socialist economy equal to the picture of capitalist conditions created by Balzac. "We must first become absolutely familiar with our material before we can make free use of it in our literature" he said.

Erwin Strittmatter, 44-year old agricultural labourer, who took up writing after 1945:

"An artist has not portrayed our times if he only copies life; he must add something to it.

A person who does not feel at ease in the new life cannot make that life responsible for his condition; he must see whether he has not pitched his tent too far from the river of our times.

"A person who wants to be a good writer must make himself the mouthpiece of those people who are striving, against suppression and the treat of death, towards the light; his fantasy must be the sun which makes life blossom.

"The author must not take the same position as those doctors who love their profession but not their patients. Readers need to be loved and understood, otherwise they will go to a quack. There are not only arm-chair philosophers, there are also arm-chair writers, who have forgotten that they once wanted to make humanity happy. They 'drive Socialism on' as if Socialism were an ox."

Bertolt Brecht, 57 year old dramatist, already famed for his plays in the 1920's, speaking to the dramatists' section of the congress, stated:

"If we want to adopt the new world, practically and artistically, then we must create new art methods, and study and adapt the old ones. The artistic methods of Kleist, Goethe and Schiller must be studied today, but they are not sufficient if we want to show the new. The ceaseless experiments of the revolutionary party, which are changing and re-forming our country, must be accompanied by experiments in the arts, as courageous and as necessary as the first. To reject experiments means to be content with what is already accomplished, that is to say to lag behind.

"The representation of the new is not easy. It is a question of enthusiasm for the new, knowledge of dialectic, and in addition new artistic methods. The Socialist, realistic method of representation demands continuous training, changing and new formation. Above all, it must be militant. And as a fighter it demands all weapons, ever better weapons, ever new weapons."

Arnold Zweig, 68-year-old "grand old man" of German anti-militarist literature, told the congress that at first he had not been in favour of holding it.

"But after I had read, in such a respectable paper as the Swiss 'Baseler Nationalzeitung' ... that we are all 'under the order of Moscow', I felt it was a good idea to declare here, in full publicity, what we are. We are independent writers, I have been an independent writer since 1910, and have not ceased to be an independent writer.

"I believe that we receive orders — but from within ourselves. We receive our orders from our conscience in the interests of the progressive part of humanity, we receive these orders from our convictions, our independent thought.

WRITERS' GALLERY (2)

Erwin Strittmatter

Novelist. Former agricultural labourer who has written a much-praised new novel "Tinko" reflecting post-war changes in the countryside as seen through the eyes of a schoolboy.

"We are ready to plunge into the fray with our entire strength for those things dedicated to the growth of the proletariat, the growth of a new humanity.

"The man who allows himself to be made the tool of an exploiting class, a clique inclined to war ... that man is guilty of committing suicide.

"I believe that the people must live. I do not want art to live and people to die."

* * *

There was much discussion at the congress of the relation between ideological clarity and artistic mastery. This question had been raised very sharply in local discussions and newspaper articles before the congress opened.

One literary critic in particular had published a series of articles setting forth his opinion that ideological clarity was all-important, and that artistic mastery or talent was of secondary importance.

Many speakers at the congress roundly trounced this critic, not only for his one-sided argument, but also because of the intolerant and school-masterly manner in which he had written.

Willi Bredel, 54-year-old worker and veteran anti-fascist stated that the critic in question had adopted a position of "intolerance and block-headeness" which had not in any way helped young writers, but had considerably

hindered them. "Ideology cannot be something to be learned, even less learned by rote; ideology is a philosophy which entails not only expressing a point of view but also acting in accordance with it; it includes moral convictions, character, and deep feeling."

Willi Bredel called for more efforts to be made to develop the talents which were still lying fallow among the workers in the factories and the countryside. "Among the great number of new works which will then be written, there will also be masterpieces. But to say that from now on we shall all write only masterpieces is of course nonsense."

Karl Reinhold Doederlin, 38-year-old Catholic writer from West Germany who has been living in the German Democratic Republic since 1952, emphasised that in his opinion Christians and Marxists could well work side by side for the maintenance of peace and the construction of a just social order.

He criticised the fact that although many books with a Christian basis were being written and published in the Republic, they were not receiving sufficient attention from the critics and reviewers.

Kuba (Kurt Bartel), 42-year-old poet, stated:

"It is not so simple to write about, and give a true picture, of life in a new state, a workers' and peasants' state. In the German Democratic Republic every person has to go through a personal revolution, and it is our task as writers to help him or her in this.

"Our writers' association must give the greatest help to the writers who are tackling these difficult contemporary problems. A young writer may go to a factory today, and write a book about his experiences which is not very good: but we must remember that this will form part of his experience which may help him to write a great book in ten years time."

Stephan Hermlin, 40-year-old poet, criticised some of the publishers of the Republic, who shy away from publishing something off the beaten track. He asked "Why have we no translations of works by Hemingway, Steinbeck and Faulkner, to name a few?"

Anna Seghers, leading novelist, aged 56, touched on a number of problems and tasks facing writers in East Germany.

"Ten years have passed since the liberation from Hitlerite fascism," she said. "People had scarcely begun to build up out of the ruins and to wipe out the remnants of fascism, when from the West came voices urging them not to do so. A large part of the population helped to clear away the rubble in Berlin, but the rubble in their minds was not so easily cleared away. Sometimes a house is built before its owner is ready to move in."

She spoke at length about the reasons for a lack of convincing and exciting narrative in the new East German literature, attributing this in part to writers' hesitation to write about many complicated problems of our times, and pointing out that a writer's attitude is determined by his understanding of general developments.

"We are building up a bright, peaceful life here," she said. "There are plenty of obstacles, but we are overcoming them. We see our road clear before us." But to inspire his readers, a writer must neither leave them with an unsolved problem nor gloss over difficulties and present readers with a solution which has not been solved within his story.

"Just as different people were inspired by different motives to join the revolution, and only discovered its real meaning in the course of struggle, so many people have only come to understand our development through their work. A book which takes readers through the various succeeding phases of these struggles will help them."

"We need books which show what happened to young men who were drawn into fascism and war, books which show their doubts, despair and the changes wrought in them by their terrible experiences."

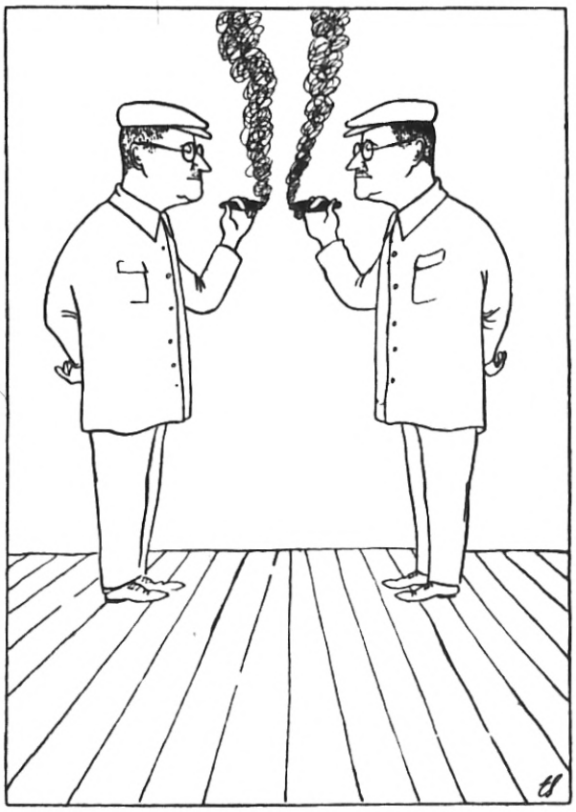
Only when the author can show ruthlessly what such people were, what they have become and how the changes have come about, will his portrayal convince the reader and change him, too, if he is still caught up in the old lies. This, she said, is a tremendously difficult but supremely important task.

She emphasised that writers should not only learn to understand the technical details of work in various walks of life; they must go deeper into people's inner thoughts and conflicts. Only a writer who loves and feels his subject deeply can write convincingly about it.

"Our state gives writers great possibilities today. They can study, they can travel near or far to find their material in real life . . . But when a writer decides upon a theme which does not really appeal to him, he is like a young girl who marries an old man for his money." It is therefore very important that writing contracts should only be offered or accepted when it is absolutely clear that the writer is truly and deeply bound up with the proposed theme, and that he has the capacity to deal with it.

Speaking of the "experience" of writers, Anna Seghers said that this is not the same thing as living through

WRITERS' GALLERY (3)



Bertolt Brecht

Dramatist and poet. Author of the "Threepenny Opera", "Mother Courage", and the "Caucasian Chalk Circle". In his works Brecht applies the method of "getting outside the problem". Here he is seen getting outside the problem of Brecht.

experiences oneself. "I have born children, for example, but I know of many wonderful descriptions of birth written by men. So that experience has other sources besides personal experience. If I learn to know a person thoroughly, and to understand his character and his attitude to other people, I can understand what he would do in a situation which I myself have not experienced."

"Peace goes out from our state, the workers' and peasants' state," she said, "because profit-making, exploitation, economic crises, and war along with them, are impossible here. If we can show what our life is, then we can break through the frontiers within our land. We can help our people to join together in a free and happy life and to see behind the wiles of those who try to prevent this. That is why all the questions of presentation and of art with which we are dealing here are so important."

CONGRESS NOTES

By the Editor

"What, another congress? Are they always having congresses in East Germany?" I can well imagine some readers saying this to themselves when they see that we have devoted several pages of the current issue of GERMAN REPORT to the Writers' Congress in Berlin.

Why do the writers in the German Democratic Republic have to have a congress? Why don't they just stay at home and write books? Of course part of the answer is that the German Writers' Association which held the congress, is in effect the trade union of the writers, and that the authors came together to discuss questions of payment for their work, relations with publishers, and other subjects which concern authors in Britain and America just as much as they do writers in the German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union.

But such discussions formed only a very small part of the work of the congress.

In a country on the way to socialism, the authors are not primarily interested in making money (though they want enough to live decently), or in "expressing their personality". They want to help build socialism.

Since the actual building of socialism is something new in their lives — even in the lives of veterans of the working class movement who have been socialists all their lives — they want to discuss with each other how they can do the job more effectively. That is what the congress was about, and I think, after sitting through most of the discussions, that it did the job pretty well.

Who are the Writers?

Who are the writers in the German Democratic Republic? I got to thinking about this on the first day of the congress, as I looked at the people sitting on the platform. It struck me that a remarkable number of them were people whom I had first met or heard of nearly twenty years ago in the ranks of the International Brigade in Spain. There was Ludwig Renn, former Prussian officer, who had opposed German militarism after the first world war, and then put his military experience at the disposal of the Spanish Republic; Hans Marchwitza, Ruhr miner who had hurried to Spain when the fascists rose against the Republic; Willi Bredel, Bodo Uhse, Kurt Stern and Eduard Claudius, all of them writers who had fought the nazis, first in Germany, and then in the ranks of the Thaelmann Battalion in the Spanish War of Liberation.

And these familiar faces on the platform made me curious as to who all the other writers were, sitting in the body of the hall. So during one of the boring speeches — a few boring speeches seem inevitable at any congress — I leafed through a short "Who's Who" of the authors in the German Democratic Republic which has just been issued.

The results were interesting. The reference volume contained about 270 authors one or more of whose books have been published in East Germany since 1945. Of this total, at least 89 had been persecuted, imprisoned or driven out of Germany by the nazis because of their active anti-fascist work. Eleven had served in the International Brigades. (The total of active anti-nazis is probably higher, since the authors themselves had contributed the short biographies printed in the volume, and quite a number had omitted details of their anti-fascist record as something to be taken for granted.)

And what of the remainder? The overwhelming majority had been too young to have had much chance to fight against Hitler, but they had been through the mills of war. A recurrent note in their biographies was the phrase "When he returned from prisoner of war camp in 1947, he went to work in a factory". And now, coming from their factories, their mines and their farms, these young men and women are playing an increasingly important part in the literature of the German Democratic Republic.

Of course, the fact that a man or woman was a brave anti-fascist fighter does not necessarily mean that he can write a good book. But it is almost certainly a guarantee that he is not going to write books that aid and abet a revival of fascism and militarism in Germany.

Journalistic Honour

There was an interesting little incident during the congress which showed that some journalists working for West German and West Berlin newspapers have retained a sense of decency and integrity. All western journalists interested had access to the congress, to report on it in any way they saw fit. But on the second day of the congress the West Berlin newspaper "Kurier" reported that a very distinguished East German authoress, of international fame, was not able to attend "because she was undergoing a cure for chronic alcoholism".

The report was a complete fabrication, and to anyone who knew the authoress an obvious fabrication. The congress secretariat decided, very rightly, that the journalist apparently responsible should be excluded from further sessions.

Whereupon the journalist representing the "Kurier", a young West Berlin newspaperman named Karl-Heinz Wenzel, addressed an official letter to the congress explaining that the offending sentence had been written into his article without his knowledge or consent, and announcing that he was severing forthwith his connection with the "Kurier". He was immediately readmitted to the congress to continue his coverage for West German newspapers which he was also representing.

His step may not seem very exciting to people who have not experienced the "cold war" atmosphere against the East fostered in the West Berlin press, but in this atmosphere it demanded very real courage. I sincerely hope that I shall not have to report in a future number of GERMAN REPORT that young Mr. Wenzel is now on the West Berlin dole cue as a result. And to reassure readers who might think that I should not have mentioned his name here, I must state that he himself has no objection to full publicity being given to his action.

THE BOY & THE POSTER

By Anna Seghers

Soon after the foundation of the German Democratic Republic, when I got back to Berlin from a journey, I noticed a poster with a portrait of Wilhelm Pieck hanging at a street corner. A few passers-by were standing in front of it. One had a pleased face, one an empty face, one an angry face, and one an uncomprehending face. In front of me stood a worker, with a little boy holding his hand.

The boy asked: "Who is that?"

"That is our President," said his father.

"What's a President?" the boy asked.

"Now we've got our own state" his father explained slowly, "and it is called the German Democratic Republic . . ." And all the others suddenly looked at him, smilingly, or curiously, or derisively, or simply amazed that he should take so much trouble with the boy.

". . . And a state is a country with a lot of people, with factories and fields, and with laws which keep everything running right. A few people have the job of looking after good order: they make the laws, they are the government. And among these people the first and most important is called President."

The listeners smiled; a young man started to correct the explanation; an old man with a wing collar, the sort you used to see in Potsdam, made a mocking face. But the boy asked in his clear voice, which cut easily through the babble: "And why is this Wilhelm Pieck the President?"

"Well, it's like this," said the worker. "He was already one of those who helped, a long time ago, when the best German workers got together. There was a war then too, and cities were being destroyed. And lots of rich factory owners were making a lot of money out of it, just like they did in this last war. And the people who realised all this said: 'Stop the war'. And the best workers, who didn't want a war any more, and who didn't want a state in which the factory owners did anything they liked, said: 'Now we shall make the government'. But the stupider people allowed themselves to be fooled by the swindlers with their hate propaganda. And at that time the workers fought in the streets of Berlin . ."

The gentleman with the wing collar, who could not control himself any longer, shouted: "Hey, you. Fancy telling a child things like that."

And the father answered quietly: "If you don't like it, then you don't need to listen. Don't interrupt me, or you are going to get a big surprise. After all, this is my state and my President."

So the gentleman slunk away, and the others laughed, and the boy asked: "Why does all this make him your President?"

"The sort of gents like that one who has just buzzed off" the worker continued calmly, "were against us then too. I say 'us' though at that time I was about your age. You can easily imagine what gents like that would do if they had rifles: they would shoot you and me. And at that time they had rifles. They hated particularly three people: one was a woman called Rosa Luxemburg; one was called Karl Liebknecht; and the third was called Wilhelm Pieck. All three of them had fought for our cause; in the middle of the war they had fought for peace. And for this reason they were all made prisoners and dragged away. They were taken to a building, to a hotel; and there were a lot of officers there."

By this time the passers-by standing in front of the poster were all looking at the worker. You could see from their faces that they did not know much about this story either. And so they were listening as intently as the boy.

"Liebknecht and Luxemburg were taken away, and they were dead when they were found again. Rosa Luxemburg was pulled out of the Landwehr canal, and Karl Liebknecht, so I have heard, was found in the mortuary, where they keep the bodies on ice. But Wilhelm Pieck, who had been dragged into the hotel with his two friends, was able to escape down a corridor at the last moment. He hid in the city with comrades. And then he went out to join in the fight again. And he kept up the fight all his life long, fighting for the working class. That is why he is President today."

"If people do what he did, do they get to be President?" the boy asked again.

"Only here, only here" said his father earnestly, while all the others smiled, "because we have the proper Republic now. Come along now," he added.

"But" the boy insisted, because he did not want to stop at that, "were you there too, in the building, in the hotel where they were taken?"

"I think Wilhelm Pieck was then about as old as I am now, and I told you already that I was as old as you are, and you weren't even born then."

The boy did not like to think there had been a time when he had not even been born. But I did not hear what his father answered as they walked away.

(From the anthology "Authors and Artists on Wilhelm Pieck's 80th Birthday", published by the Aufbau Verlag, Berlin.)

PIECK'S SHIRTS

By Arno Schmuckler

My mother sent me out to get some lace curtains ironed, and I landed in a little ironing business in the north of Berlin. There was a notice on the door stating that Frau Lowka ruled here over her ironing board.

She turned out to be a grandmother, as comfortable as she was plump, and I complimented her on three freshly ironed snow-white shirts which were lying on a shelf.

"Yes, my lad" she said. "I learned to iron shirts right. And I always do my very best with those shirts, because they are for our President."

"Really for Wilhelm Pieck?" I asked.

"Of course. It wouldn't be so bad for you, perhaps, my lad. But after all, he's President. And we can't let him walk about with badly-ironed collars."

I quite agreed, and began to get interested.

"How did you happen to get mixed up with the President?" I asked.

"How did it happen? Well, his driver happened to bring in his own shirts once, and then he thought to himself. 'The President has been looking for a long time for someone who can iron shirts like that, I ought to tell him about it'. And when I had

ironed the President's shirts for the first time, they asked me to wash them too, but I said: 'No, I am an old woman of 78; you can wash them at home.' Anyway, after I had done the first batch of shirts, the driver came back and said: 'Frau Lowka, both the President and his daughter Frau Winter said that you must be an ironing-woman who really knows what she's doing'. So you see, young man, its always a good thing to learn your trade properly."

And with obvious pride Frau Lowka produced an autographed photo of Wilhelm Pieck, and several letters,

"Yes, he sent me this, and Frau Winter wrote to me too, and something like that is very nice. And word seems to have got around where he has his shirts ironed; one day a lady came in with a bundle under her arm. Who do you think it was?"

I told Frau Lowka that I simply could not guess.

"Well, you'll be surprised. I thought to myself: Oh lordie, here's someone else bringing me work, and I didn't want any more customers! And the lady came in, and said she'd like to bring me shirts to iron. And I said: 'Do you know what, ma'am, I don't want to take on any more customers; I'm getting on, and you can see I work all alone here'. Then the lady said she came on the recommendation of Frau Winter, but I said I didn't know the name, because I didn't want to take on any more customers. But she said: 'Frau Lowka, you must know Frau Winter, the daughter of our President; and my name is Grotewohl'. And I took off my glasses and said: 'Well, Frau Grotewohl, I must talk quite straight with you. I have specially kept a picture of the Prime Minister, and I often said to myself it's a crying shame the way his wife lets him run around — his collars never sit right'. So Frau Grotewohl said: 'Yes, Frau Lowka, but there are so few people who know how to iron a shirt right'. So I told her I would take her on as a customer, and I'd stop serving one of my old customers — he lives in West Berlin now, and he can find somewhere else to get his shirts ironed. After all, young man, the Prime Minister deserves a bit of consideration, doesn't he?"

And I agreed. So Frau Lowka produced a pamphlet with a picture of Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl on the cover, and pointed at it. "Is there anything wrong with that collar now?" she asked. "That's one of the collars I ironed."

And it really was just as it should be. That was the end of my conversation with Frau Lowka. She did not think her story was anything particular. And why should she? An old working woman irons the shirts of an old worker who has become the President of a workers' state. There is nothing surprising about it. And let us hope our President Wilhelm Pieck will continue for many many years to wear the shirts which Frau Lowka irons for him so lovingly.

(Condensed from "Das Magazin", Berlin, January 1956)

DR. JOSEPH WIRTH, MAN OF PEACE, DIES

Dr. Josef Wirth, former German Chancellor, and one of West Germany's doughtiest fighters for peace, died in Freiburg, West Germany, on January 3rd 1956.

Dr. Wirth, who was 76, was awarded the Stalin International Peace Prize a few weeks before his death. He was for many years a leading member of the old liberal Zentrum Party, and in 1921—22 was Chancellor of the Weimar Republic. During his term of office he was largely instrumental in the signature of the Treaty of Rapallo between the German Republic and the Soviet Union, the first important international agreement concluded by the young Soviet Republic.

During the Hitler period Dr. Wirth was forced to emigrate. After his return to Germany in 1948 he played a prominent part in attempts to bridge differences between East and West Germany, and in the fight against the remilitarisation of West Germany. He was also a leading representative of West German liberalism in the World Peace Movement.

GAMAL SALEM FOR DEMOCRATIC GERMANY

An Egyptian government delegation under the leadership of Deputy Premier Gamal Salem will shortly visit the German Democratic Republic, it was officially announced in Cairo. The exact date of the visit will be announced later.

The visit, which is expected to lead to even better trade relations between the two states, is the result of an invitation extended by the Government of the German Democratic Republic. In November 1955 East German Deputy Premier Heinrich Rau made an official visit to Cairo, and concluded an important agreement under which a permanent Egyptian Trade Delegation with consular rights is to be established in Berlin. During 1956 East Germany and Egypt are scheduled to exchange goods to the value of six million pounds.

East German Trade Mission to Sudan

The German Democratic Republic will establish a permanent trade mission in Khartoum, capital of the newly-founded Sudanese Republic. In a message to East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl early in January the Sudanese Prime Minister Ismail el Azhari expressed his friendship and his wish for further cooperation.

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NELSON GREETS NEW GERMANY

German Writers Call "Release Steve"

The Congress of German Writers held in Berlin in January passed a strongly-worded resolution calling for the acquittal of Steve Nelson, American writer and political worker, who is at present appealing against "thought control" sentences totalling 25 years passed against him by Pennsylvania courts.

Nelson's book "The Volunteers" dealing with his experiences in the International Brigade in Spain has been published with great success in the German Democratic Republic in both English and German editions, and his latest book "The Thirteenth Juror", dealing with his various trials, will soon be appearing.

Below we reprint a letter which Steve Nelson recently addressed to a friend in the German Democratic Republic.

* * *

Dear Friends,

It was with great joy that I received word that you in East Germany will be publishing my book, "THE THIRTEENTH JUROR", in English in the Panther Book series. This, plus the decision recently announced by the Dietz Verlag that they are getting out a German language edition, is really heartwarming and of great meaning to me and my friends here.

These two events, in a minor way, point up the great strides that have been made by the people of East Germany since liberation from Nazism in the establishment of an advanced democratic state which speaks for the conscience of all of Germany.

Eighteen years ago, I met in the trenches of Spain many valiant members of the Thaelmann battalion, among them Gerhart Eisler, Heinrich Rau, and others whose names I don't recall now. It was there that we members of the Lincoln Brigade learned many wonderful German workers' songs, among them the Peat Bog Soldiers and the Hans Beimler song. They were the most inspiring marching songs we knew. We even learned how to sing them in German.

Who would have dared to think at that time that on the very homeground of Nazism such great changes would take place? Even the boldest amongst us did not dare to predict this. Yet today there is this new Germany which is engaged not only in uprooting the vicious Nazi ideology at home but is helping to expose manifestations of fascism in the United States which developed during the cold war under the hated flag of McCarthyism.

Only such exposures and worldwide protests in conjunction with the struggle of the American people will bring these political trials and persecutions to an end. Only such protests will open the doors of the prisons and let out such people as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn; seventy-four-year-old and ailing Pop Mindel; Bob Thompson, Spanish veteran and hero of World War II in the Pacific; and people like Gus Hall, Pettis Berry, Betty Gannett, William Weinstone, Phil Frankfeld, Arnold Johnson, Louis Weinstock and others. The reversal of my own sentence, 5 years on the one count and 20 on the other, totalling 25 years, and the possibility of my freedom are tied up with the freedom of these and all others.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

GI Wives Bring Jimcrow to West Germany

The wives of American soldiers serving in West Germany have imported racial discrimination against Negroes, according to an article in the January 1956 number of "The Crisis", official organ of the American National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The article, written by Dorothy Otis Wyre, a white American, who lived for a while in West Germany as a dependent of the American occupation army stated:

"An old American friend showed up ... He made himself at home and stayed. His name was Jimcrow. Germans in the little town of Gelnhausen at first did not know the difference between Negro and white Americans."

But then white American army wives explained the difference, and "friendly German neighbours became unfriendly and rude like white Americans".

Hospital for Vietnam

Complete equipment for a modern hospital for 500 patients has been presented to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by the German Democratic Republic.

The equipment includes seven operatig rooms, an x-ray centre and a dental clinic, laboratory equipment, a complete mechanised laundry, and a mass of other equipment. 112 railway trucks were needed to haul the equipment to the Baltic port of Wismar, where it was loaded for Vietnam.

To help instal the hospital, and to instruct Vietnamese doctors and nurses in the use of the equipment, a mission of 30 medical men and women from the German Democratic Republic will leave for Vietnam at the beginning of February. They will stay in Vietnam for about nine months.

The hospital has been paid for by voluntary contributions to the solidarity fund of the National Front.

The same ship which is carrying the hospital to Vietnam is also transporting full equipment for a 16-class school now being built in Hanoi. The money for this equipment was collected by members of the Young Pioneer organisation in the Potsdam District.

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

At the beginning of January I had the honour of representing the readers of GERMAN REPORT among the guests at the official party given for President Wilhelm Pieck on his eightieth birthday.

It was quite a party. Most of the many hundreds of guests were the sort of people you would expect to see at the birthday party of a great working class leader — workers from the factories and the countryside who have made particularly valuable contributions to building up the industry and agriculture of Democratic Germany, and former workers who now occupy leading positions in the state, as ministers, factory managers, officers of the People's Police force, and so on.

Attention naturally centred round the table where Wilhelm Pieck himself was seated, with prominent guests from all parts of the world who had come to Berlin to honour him on his eightieth birthday. And they were certainly a most distinguished assembly; not distinguished in any dull old-fashioned way because they came of "good family", but distinguished for themselves, because they had all played a leading part in their own countries in the revolutionary movement and the emancipation of mankind.

I should just like to mention a few of them, to show readers the sort of men who fought shoulder to shoulder with Wilhelm Pieck in the past twenty, forty, or even sixty years.

There was, for instance, Chu Teh from China, a massive, broad-shouldered man in the uniform of a Marshal of the army of People's China, showing little trace of his seventy hard years as he raised his glass to toast the health of white-haired President Pieck. He took part in the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, and will figure large in the history books of the future as the leader of the Chinese Red Army in its fantastic "Long March" of nearly 8000 miles in 1934—35, so well described in the famous book by Edgar Snow, "Red Star Over China".

Next to him sat Klim Voroshilov, aged 74, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a position equivalent to President of the Soviet Union. He has been an active Socialist and revolutionary for sixty years — the same span of time as Wilhelm Pieck. He fought in the first Russian Revolution in 1905, was a Bolshevist delegate to the Russian Social Democratic Congress in London in 1907, and became a world figure as one of the great generals of the young Red Army which fought off the armies of intervention from the capitalist states which attacked the Soviet state from 1918 to 1921.

Another guest of honour was Dolores Ibarruri, famous as "La Pasionaria", great Spanish revolutionary leader, still glowing with an inner flame at the age of sixty. White-haired, frail Marcel Cachin, from France, 86 years old but still fighting, was the centre of congratulations following the great victory of Communist candidates in the French general election.

Most readers will know at least the names of those I have already mentioned, but the biographies of many of the other leading guests less known in the western world were just as exciting and inspiring.

There was Ton Duc Thang, for instance, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Vietnam National Assembly. Back in 1910, when most Europeans scarcely knew that Indo-China existed, he was already organising big revolutionary strikes in Saigon. For him, as for many others among the guests, the Soviet Revolution in Russia in 1917 was a highlight in his career. He was serving at the time in the French Navy, and when the French fleet was ordered into action against the young Soviet Republic in the Black Sea in 1919 he helped to organise a mutiny, and personally raised the Red Flag on the ship on which he was serving. From 1929 to 1945 he was held in a colonial prison by the French authorities.

But I could fill the whole of this issue with such inspiring details. When I got home from the party, I took out my reference books and tried to calculate how many years the twenty-odd men and women seated round the table with Wilhelm Pieck had spent in prison for their part in the fight for a better world. After reaching a total of well over one hundred years I gave up the task.

They had all come to Berlin to congratulate Wilhelm Pieck, both personally and in the name of their governments or their parties. And they had not come just to congratulate revolutionary veteran Wilhelm Pieck on reaching the ripe age of eighty; by their presence they were expressing their confidence in the German Democratic Republic, the first really democratic and progressive German state in history, a state in which for the first time the Prussian militarists, big landowners and big businessmen no longer have a say.

So far I have only talked about the foreign guests sitting round the table with President Wilhelm Pieck. But there was a constant coming and going of other, German, guests at this remarkable birthday party. A steady stream of old workers, their faces blue-pitted from the mines, their hands gnarled, went up to clink glasses with "Our Willem" as they called him proudly.

"Remember how we argued in the Berlin shop stewards' committee in October 1918 whether we were strong enough to chuck the Kaiser out, Willem?" asked one veteran. "Willem" remembered, and asked after a mutual friend from those stormy days.

Another guest recalls Wilhelm Pieck's last public appearance in Germany before the nazi terror forced him to flee: his election speech in the Berlin Sport Palace at the end of February 1933, when Hitler was already Chancellor, and the brown-shirted S. A. were daily murdering dozens of Communists; and yet another reminds him of a meeting in summer 1945 when the first faltering steps were being taken to build a new and better Germany on the ruins left by nazism.

And as I watched the scene, I could not help remembering that in the very same hall where the birthday party was held, Wilhelm Pieck had been elected President of the German Democratic Republic over six years earlier, in October 1949.

I was present then too, at that time as Berlin correspondent of Reuters News Agency. The establishment of the Democratic Republic seemed a daring step in the dark then: industry was still crippled, food rations were still very short. But men and women like Wilhelm Pieck and those now assembled to congratulate him took this step in the dark, and with the help of friends in all parts of the world, embodified by the guests who journeyed so far to attend the birthday celebrations, they made a pretty good go of it.

I don't think I can close this notebook better than with the birthday wish extended to Wilhelm Pieck by Bertolt Brecht, great German dramatist. He wrote: "If Wilhelm Pieck were not already the President of the most progressive part of Germany, then he should become it immediately."

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